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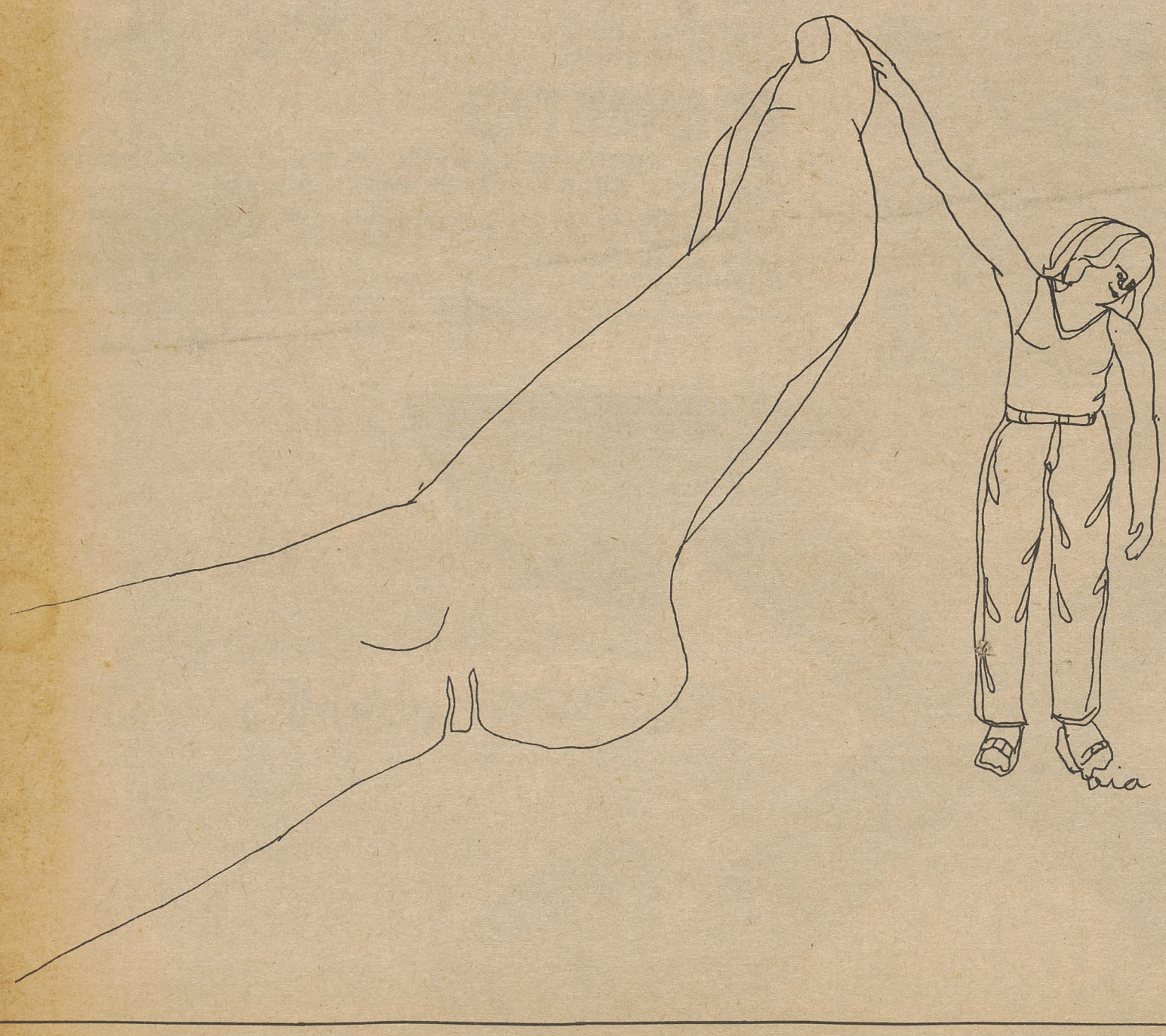

1318 35th Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20007

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VOLUME III
Number 6

January
11
1972

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COVER: This is the third cover by Anne Auberjonois, from her book People. Anne also did the drawing on page four; special thanks.

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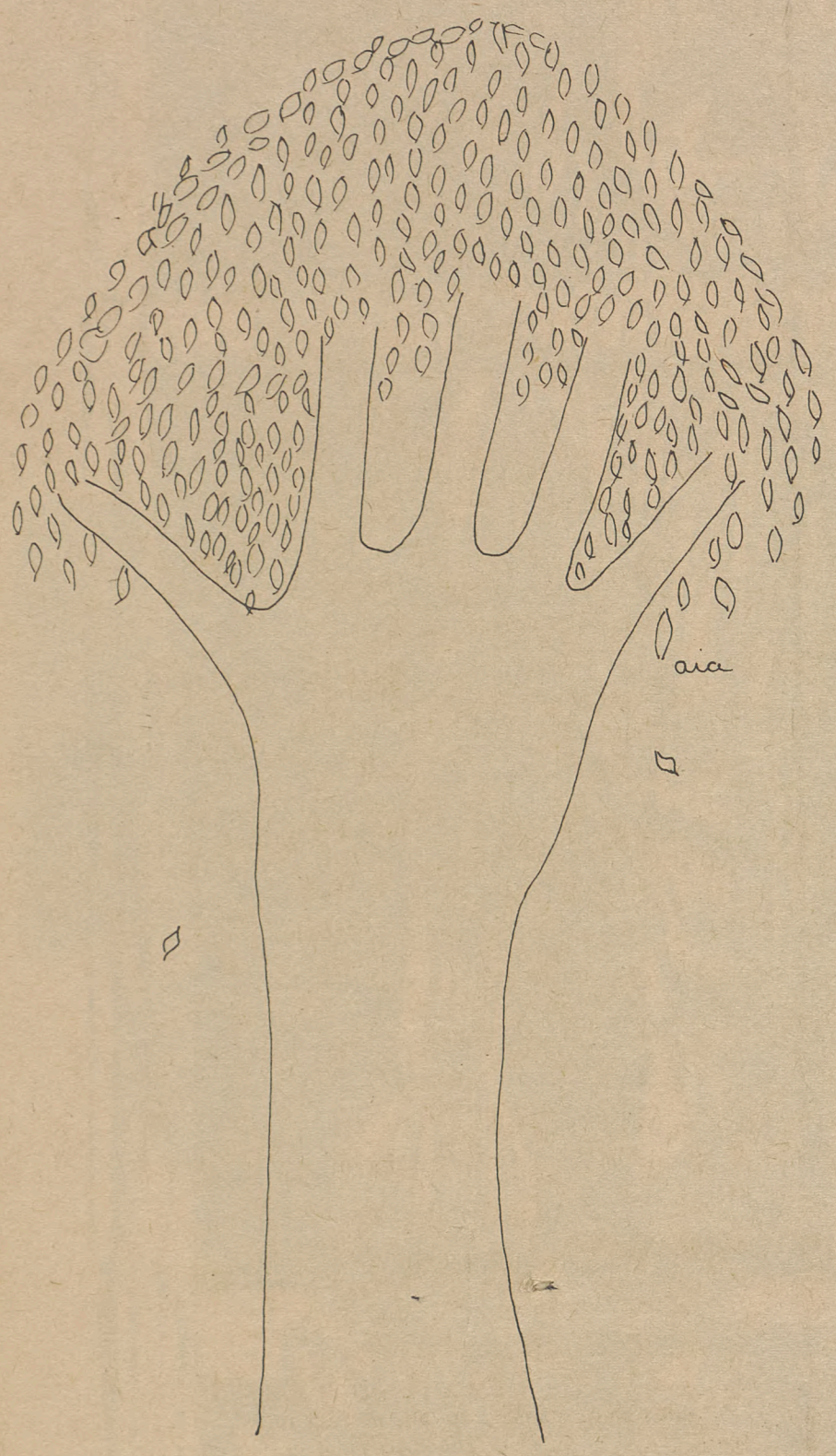

AN ESCAPE TO INDIA

Belief in the kingdom of pain and joy
or the republic of Plato
are driven out with Zeus and St. Paul.
So many sanctuaries for that positivity
of sorrow, so many flee to California,
to Greenwich Village and some to hell
disappointed by the failure of the
great prophecy.

The landmarks on the
barren ground of sophisticated violence
with the strange effects of patriotism
and dissolution of sovereignty without
earmarks of great truth. Who wrote this
scenario of matrix cybernetics,
oscillating among many principles?

Things are still in the saddle, only
more so, and they ride mankind in style
with dulcet live-and-let-live diffusion
of the acquisitive instinct and
external guide-posts for birth control.

In the coercion of opinions, fads
and fashions for the actors ther is
no inevitable purpose in the universe.
There are but elaborate necessities,
driving ambitions and lust. No
dramatic destiny, only rut. No
rules for transacting business
with the deity but retreat
and the question:
Where's my home?

The pangs of total freedom
less acute to the more placid,
to the artist a blinding sun
under the dust-laden embrace
of sirocco, o eternal in vain.

Where can you find your own
courage for battle, your own
consolation in defeat.
No shelter, no master
save your mood. Where's my home?
A chill blast still breaks in
upon the fragile refuge.

How long can you drift along,
dream a little and not unpleasantly,
have nightmares now and then
hoping for naught and believing
in nothing very much.

The rude awakening only occasionally
like an unhappy love affair
or an attack of the flu
o eternal everywhere,
mothers, sisters, wives,
warm wombs. Where's my home?

Unseen events, queer people,
vague memories in the marrow
of your bones, half-known facts
compelling to pay heed in
multiplied number, who's to be
interpreter of the writings
on the wall, of the confused
echoes of earlier tunes.
Where's my home?

To spin beneath the telescope of night
pointed silently to heaven,
to rather early assume
the feelings of
earlier
spectators, only
to find a chaos of
amusing anecdotes with
no commentaries and fat
art for art's sake. Where's my home?

The secret is locked out there somewhere
alright by the invisible king, the
primus inter pares of the skys, the
trick is to recognize the credentials
of the teacher and no questions asked
except liberavi anima meam,
then you can embark upon the
long passage to India.

Poetry

William Holland

WHAT THE OLD MEN ARE MUMBLING ABOUT

When the young man begins to leave,
when he finally gets the hint
after the unconcealed yawns and stiffening joints,
he goes and does it.

It is not enough just to say
he has grown up to know us all like family,
that we taught him
what is what.
It is not enough to say
we got it into his big, thick skull.

Before he left, during all those goodbyes,
he did not seem to recall
his old spunk and mischief,
his limbs flapping with anger
about those outrages he said we couldn't understand.

Instead, instead he thanked us for everything.
It is just not enough to say
he still hasn't found his bald spot.
We told him all along
ignorance is no defense.

MORNING ON THE BAY

The waterman will be numb on his boat by dawn.
He stares into the dark from his wife's kitchen,
past the steamed glass
to where the dark sand lies,
out where the mounds of oyster shells grow
day after day, like lava turned cold and crusty.
The wind is up, taking the chalk edges to task.
He thinks of his sons already at the pier.
They will need the city.

THE RESTORATION SOCIETY

Everyone is trying to hold that smile.
Standing in front of the canvas backdrop,
Colors gone to brittle grey,
Leaning heavily on refurbished canes,
Legs jauntily crossed, they are
Holding that smile,
Waiting for the snap of a shutter
To mark their worth.
What will appear as the image
Is like the light of stars
Long gone out, but that we still see.

MORNING VOW

The cold, it begins
with the kind of air
morning offers inside
like a look into an open casket.

Though I could still browse through my dreams,
now scurried off shimmering
like shy, rare fish,
I knew that cold,
knew my nose was chilled like a strawberry,
and that if the covers were ripped off my body
millions of guppies with gobbling lips cold as ice
would rush in like adoring fans
to nudge and kiss my exposed follicles.

I cannot draw myself to write too much
about the alarm clock,
and what happens when it brings the bloody nose
smell of fear down as the first morning command
from, God forgive me, me.

Now my face is awake,
splashed and bled of its oils
in the tiled bathroom.
I feel submission in my cheeks,
as if a cast had been lifted,
leaving me naked to the cold air
and its evil henchman, bright light.

There is still the threat of breakfast,
substances too thick to think
or do anything about but gag.

Some victory is won here every morning,
but I shall continue to take no part in it.

BOOKS

The Diaries of Anaïs Nin

ABOUT ANAIS NIN

by Pat Aburdene and Lillian DiCarlo

The work of Anais Nin is important from both a Feminist and an artistic point of view. As a writer, she compares favorably with her famous male contemporaries, Miller and Durrell.

While Durrell was just an English schoolboy and whill Miller remained a mere adolescent (through his twenties), Anais Nin was writing furiously in her diary. The story of its beginning is a clue to the complexities of the young but already directed personality of Anais Nin. At the age of 11, she sailed to America with her mother, a Danish singer, and her brother. The diary was created to keep her father, a Spanish concert violinist whom she idolized, informed of the new adventures. She remained in New York until her return to Paris as a young woman. She writes in English although Spanish is her first language.

q By the time she begins the novels, she has acquired a facility in her writing that few writers achiev. The aim of the diary is the recording of the growth and realization of the dream in life. The diaries are more than a literary document: they offer the unconscious reflections of the artist as she experiences life purely, without abstraction. Their poetry is primordial and feminine. (p.a.)

In The Diary, Volume I, 1931-34 (Harcourt Brace and World) is set in Paris during a period of great literary and artistic activity in that city. One is introduced to the philosophic basis of Nin's fiction and to some of the real life associations from which she has drawn her fictional characters. One major question she con siders is "...what is my true nature?" an important one for a writer and particularly a woman writer. She questions whether a woman can successfully be in the position of creator when men "...co nceived the patterns..." for living, but concludes that the answer for her lies in her writing ability, her creative ability. (l.d.)

In The Diary, Volume II, 1934-39, she travels from Paris to New York to serve as the assistant to the analyst Otto Rank. She tires of the quick pace of New York and of the great demands of her job there and returns to France, where the majority of this volume is written. She confronts two important questions that bear directly upon her life. First, through her association with a Spanish Republican, she becomes aware of Marxism and its relationsh ip to the Spanish Civil War. Inevitably, she is drawn into the dilemma of art versus social activism. Second, she finally reaches a point in her relationship with Henry Miller where she is able to stand apart, somewhat objectively and despite tremendous admiration for is art and energy, and decide that in other areas -- particularly in his attitudes towards women, he is insensitive and revolting. Courageously, she defends her beliefs in art, sex, and writing against both Miller and Durrell. In the end, she converts them. (p.a.)

By Volume III, she has fled Paris in front of the German Army and finds New York somewhat lacking in cultural atmosphere. She seems to have established her identity in relation to the artists and writers. She knows inimately and feels comfortable with her own literary success. In her maturity, she is helping younger writers and artists to develop their own particular talents. (l.d.)

[Ed. Note: Summaries of most of Anais Nin's other works follow. Not discussed are Solar Barque Collages and Novel of the Future. Ladders to Fire is discussed in an accompanying review. Dates and cities refer to initial publication. All are now published by the Swallow Press in Chicago.]

D.H. Lawrence, An Unprofessional Study (Paris, 1932)

This short appreciative critique was Nin's first published work. One chapter is devoted specifically to Lawrence on women. But, she notes, most of his work concerns women and in her opinion at that time, he seems to have remarkable insight into the feelings of women and to have portrayed these feelings almost as well as any woman could. (l.d.)

House of Incest (Paris, 1936)

House of Incest begins:

All I know is contained in this book
written without witness
an edifice without dimension
a city hanging in the sky

It is that kind of work -- absolute in its beauty and its heavi ness. Technically, it is a perfect prose poem. Anais Nin calls it a woman't "Season in Hell!", referring to the French symbolist poet Rimbaud. It is inspired by the radical altering of her consciousness as a result of her meeting the Millers and her subsequent relationship with June. (p.a.)

Winter of Artifice (Paris, 1939)

This trilogy is a youthful exploration of one of the several conflicting selves Nin finds within her, the child self searching for her absent father; someone to whom she could yield completely, who would give direction and meaning to her life. In the third part, she seems to come to a resolution. She realizes that in order to grow as a woman, she must sacrifice her father; the image she would like to hold of him proves too difficult to maintain, does not provide the answers she needs to have, the light of a new understanding of herself. (l.d.)

Under A Glass Bell (New York, 1948)

In this collection of short stories, Nin employs the image of a glass bell to express the possibility of distortion existing in each person's view of himself in relation to other people and their ideas and world views. These stories are less intensely autobiographical than most of her other fiction, though they concern many of the kinds of human relationships which she talks about having had herself, in the diaries. (l.d.)

Children of the Albatross (New York, 1947)

The tenderness of Djuna's relationships recalls Nin's almost motherly concern for every friend and acquaintance. Yet, within this mood, there are passages of sensitive, poetic eroticism. Utterly absent are the anxieties portrayed in Spy or Incest. The female thought and sensuality of Djuna are so well developed that the lack of structure and movement are hardly noticed. (p.a.)

The Four Chambered Heart (New York, 1950)

Nin explores another of her multi-selves. One has the feeling that she is unable to persue completely theses aspects of her character in actuality, so she follows them to their ultimate conclusions in her fiction. Here, she portrays her self-sacrificing self, Djuna, imprisioned in what she calls her "good self", rebelling against the social a[illegible]e which this paricular self gains from her family, her[illegible]ments "there were other selves which interested h[illegible]he learned to conceal or to stifle: her in[illegible]f who loved tales, her high-temper[illegible]htning, her stormy self."" (l.d.)

A Spy i[illegible]

for [illegible]d frenzied search
one[illegible]void confronting
wi[illegible]exemplifies the
c[illegible]er, is free,
[illegible]tered. The
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THE DIARY OF ANAIS NIN, Volume IV, Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1971, 225 pp., hardcover, $7.50 [Previous diaries available in paper, $2.85 each]

by Judy Willis

I have never been able to keep a diary. My first and last attempt was at the age of 13, when, because all my girl friends had diaries, I decided to get one too. The diary came pre-titled in gold lettering; "My Secret Life". A silver lock held its pink cover together over those sacred pages where I was to write my secrets and then lock them up and hide the key where only I would know to find it. I dutifully tried to write my secrets down every night. But after only a couple of days, I stopped. Maybe it was because I didn't have enough secrets. I remember, though, that the only time I thought about going back to writing in the diary was when I didn't have anything to do. When I was busy living, I didn't have the time to write.

Anais Nin began writing in her diary when she was eleven years old -- a couple of years younger than me when I scribbled down my few pink secrets. She has continued to keep her diary throughout her life -- indeed, it probably still keeping the diary -- even though she was advised by friends and psychoanalysts to put it aside. Today, she has at least 103 volumes to show for it. Volum IV of the published series represents volumes 68 to 74 of the manuscript.

The writing of a diary, day after year after decade, involves a certain amount of egotism -- or, maybe, to be kinder, it involves a certain amount of the search for self or the need for assurance that one still has a self. At any rate, it is the epitome of Romanticism, and I obviously am not a Romantic most of the time and she certainly is. Yet, one of the wonders of Anais Nin's diaries is that no matter how much you or I may differ from her in temperment or background, it would be difficult not to identify with her in some way.

That many of her friends were famous or became famous is incidental to the literary value of the Diary. Yes, it is interesting that her friends included Henry Miller, Antonin Artaud, Otto Rank, James Agee, James Baldwin, Andre Breton, Truman Capote, Maya Deren, Lawrence Durrell, Gore Vidal, Edmund

Wilson, Richard Wright, and Frank Lloyd Wright, Yet if this were the primary subject matter of the diaries, they would be nothing more than literary gossip, which is fun, but so what? It's the small, personal details and the depth of feeling with which she describes them that make the diaries important. Like when she talks somewhere in Volume I of the times when she was a child that she fell asleep listening to her father and other musicians playing string quartets in her home, just as I did. In Volume IV, she refers to her brother Joaquin's following in their father's footsteps, while she became, not a musician, but a writer:

> When he [Joaquin] was five years old, a spirited and restless child no one could tame, he would spend hours absolutely still on the staircase of our home in Brussels, listening to the musicians rehearsing. That was the sign of his vocation. We both listened. I can still hear the lines of Bach which were most often repeated. Joaquin became a musician, and in me music was channeled into writing.

The time span covered by Volume IV is 1944 to 1947, when Anais Nin is living in Greenwich Village after fleeing Paris as the Nazis approached. She and a Peruvian revolutionary named Gonzolo are handsetting her novels on a recently purchase handpress. Now, I got involved with a handpress once and that is another strictly Romantic endeavor. Happily, she finds a publisher, E. P. Dutton, through Gore Vidal, of all people, who pops into Anais Nin's life like this:

> Kimon Friar asked me to attend his lecture on love at the YMHA so I went yesterday. I was in a depressed mood. I wore a black dress with long sleeves half covering the hands, and a small heart-shaped black hat... shaped like Mary Stuart's hat... Maya Deren sat a few chairs away. Next to me sat a handsome young lieutenant. during a pause I leaned over to speak with Maya. She said: "You look dramatic." I said: "I feel like Mary Stuart, who will soon be beheaded." The lieutenant leaned over and introduced himself: "I am Warrant Officer Gore Vidal. I am a descendant of Troubador Vidal."

In the Village, Anais Nin is surrounded by a salon of young admirers-writers, mostly men, many homosexual. These, she decides, she prefers to the older Edmund Wilson who was divorcing Mary McCarthy at the time and whose Formalistic approach to literature and whose more set personality threatens to suffocate Anais Nin. Here's what happened after an argument she had with Wilson over her liking, and his disliking, young writers: "The next day I had a cold. Edmund Wilson sent flowers, and a set of Jane Austen, with a note. He was hoping I would learn how to write a novel from reading her! But I am not an imitator of past styles."

Later, Wilson tells her, "I would love to be married to you, and I would teach you to write."

Their views on literature are irreconcilable. Anais Nin quotes Wilson on Joyce:

> 'Just as Joyce in Ulysses laid the Odyssey under requisition to help provide a structure for his material -- material which once it had begun to gush from the rock of Joyce's sealed personality at the blow of Aaron's rod of free associations, threatened to rise and submerge the artist, like the flood which the sorcerer's apprentice let loose by his bedevilled broom..."

Then she comments:

> Whoever has studies psychoanalysis knows that there is no need to look for a classical myth outside to contain the free association. The structure lies at the core of free association and has to be searched for, like opening the labyrinth... In other words, it is an invisible structure at first, and only when fully explored will it yield its own pattern.

It is Wilson's Platonic neo-Classicism (is that redundant? which insists that literature conform to an already established structure versus Nin's Romanticism which says that a literary work is organic, that it must grow naturally, that when it is completed its form will be revealed as being the work itself. Or, as is credited to Frank Lloyd Wright, "Form follows function".

I agree with Nin, not Edmund Wilson. Not because of any dislike of form. As a matter of fact, I dislike Romanticism in music and in wondering why, I guess that it's because music is inherently a formal, structured art, whereas language has no unbreakable rules. Like I consider the works of writers classified as Romantics, from Blake to Miller (is he the last Romantic? What is the stuff sombody's writing today?) to be superior to the writings of say the Neo-Classicists. (Did I ever tell you that I cannot stand Swift or Johnson?)

Anais Nin is an experimental, an exploratory, writer. She was trying to do (at least) two things: write from a woman's point of view, and write on several different psycological levels. I tried something like that in a creative writing course a long time ago, before I had even heard of Anais Nin, and my professor scribbled on the manuscript: "This is an interesting experiment, but do you think it's worth it?" Yes, Prof. Male Chauvinist -- who told the class that he hated "women writers" -- I now think it would have been worth it, but unfortunately I listened to you. Fortunately Anais Nin did not listen to her detractors.

At the time that she was writing Volume IV of the diaries, she was working on a novel entitled THIS HUNGER, which later became LADDERS TO FIRE (Swallow Press, 1959). I am sure that my professor's criticism could also be leveled at this novel: It is an interesting experiment (although not anything like mine, stylistically), but is it worth it? Of course it is. Not because it is a work of art, but because it attempts to be. Nin could have followed the advice of Wilson and other of her critics and written finely-plotted, cleanly-narrated novels, and been a writer of best sellers. Instead, she chose to write, as she puts it, from the unconscious. She says:

> How easy it is to do what Steinbeck does, to take people suffering physical hunger, physical poverty, whose troubles are direct, concrete, simple. His world is simple to tell. I take a far more unexplored world, that of neurosis, and I want to picture the drama which the psychologist struggles with every day: a world of diffused vision, broken connections, symbolic dramas in which the psychic vision creates totally different and elusive problems.

In LADDERS TO FIRE, Anais Nin sought to explore what she perceived to be the feminine unconscious. The novel has three main characters. She describes them as: "Sabina, the woman of passion; Lillian, the woman of instinct but inhibited; Djuna, the woman of the psyche".

The novel is about the relationships of Lillian -- who seemed to me to be most like the Anais Nin revealed in the Diary, although, as she says, all the characters are different aspects of her own personality -- her lover, Jay, Djuna, and Sabina. With Djuna, Lillian has a close friendship in which there is little eroticism. It is with Sabina that the extension of emotional attachment to physical desire and possession which is not really possession, but narcissism, takes place. Because she wrote -- quite beautifully -- about a lesbian relationship, Nin was assumed to be a lesbian, herself. After the publication of LADDERS TO FIRE, Leo Lerman, whom she considered a friend, telephoned her to say: "You should lie low and hide after all this exposure of one woman loving another." "(The relationship I describe is not even Lesbian!" she says.

But the whole novel must have been inspired by her infatuation with Henry Miller's wife, June, some ten years earlier. In almost the identical words in which she described June, in Volume I of the Diary, she describes the character Sabina:

> As she walked heavily towards Lillian from the darkness of the hallway into the light of the door, Lillian saw for the first time the woman she had always wanted to know. She saw Sabin's eyes burning, heard her voice so rusty and immediatly felt drowned in her beauty. She wanted to say: I recognize you. I have often imagined a woman like you.

In LADDERS TO FIRE, Anais Nin was able to bring her relationship with June Miller to the physical consummation which neither had been capable of in "real life":

> The dresses. Sabina's dress rolled around her like long sea weed. She wanted to turn and drop it on the floor but her hands lifted it like a Bayadere lifting her skirt to dance and she lifted it over her head. She [Lillian] walked from the place where her dress had fallen holding her breasts as if she expected to be mortally thrust... Their bodies touched and then fell away, as if both of them had touched a mirror, their own image upon a mirror. They had felt the cold wall, they had felt the mirror that never appeared when they were taken by man. Sabina had merely touched her own youth, and Lillian her free passions.

What else has Anais Nin said about women? A quote from Volume IV of the Diary:

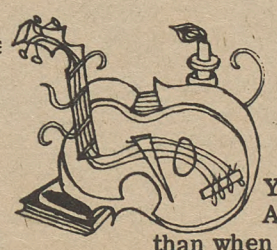
> The conflicts of woman in present-day society. Themes of development of woman in her own terms, not as an imitation of man...the effort of woman to find her own psychlogy, and her own significance, in contradiction to man-made psychology and interpretation. Woman finding her own language, and articulating her own feelings, discovering her own feelings, discovering her own perceptions.

In LADDERS TO FIRE, she describes Lillian's marriage:

> ... the care Lillian spent in the house, on her husband and children came from some part of her being that was not the deepest Lillian... Who had made the marriage? Who had desired the children?... Lillian, guided by her background, her mother, her sisters, her habits, her home as a child, her blindness in regard to her own desires, had made all this and then lived in it, but it had not been made out of the deeper elements of her nature, and she was a stranger in it.

Her description of a party in the novel ends:

> Under the house and under the garden there were subterranean passages and if no one heard the premonitory rumblings before the explosion, it would all erupt in the form of war and revolution. The humiliated, the defeated, the oppressed, the enslaved. Woman's misused and twisted strength....



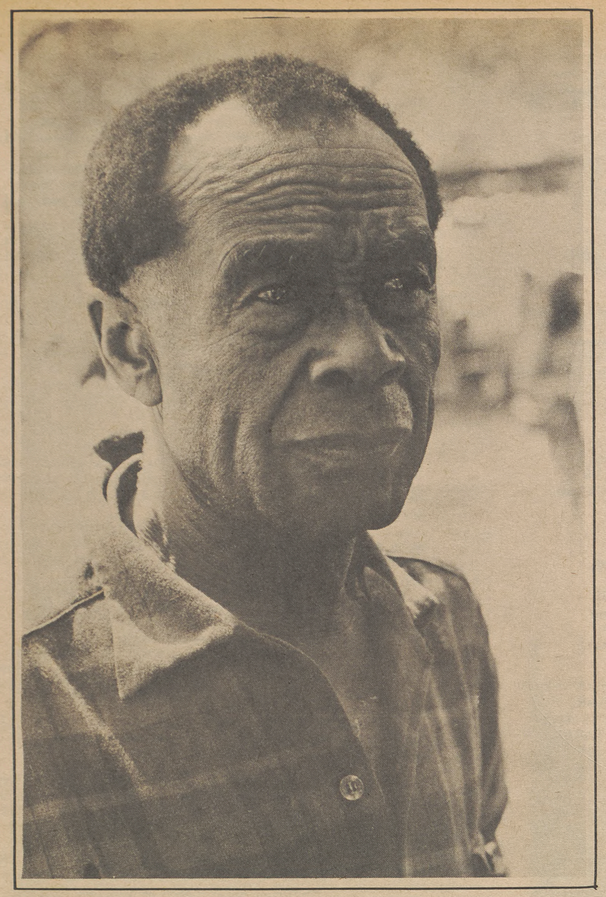
Yes, this was written in the 1940's

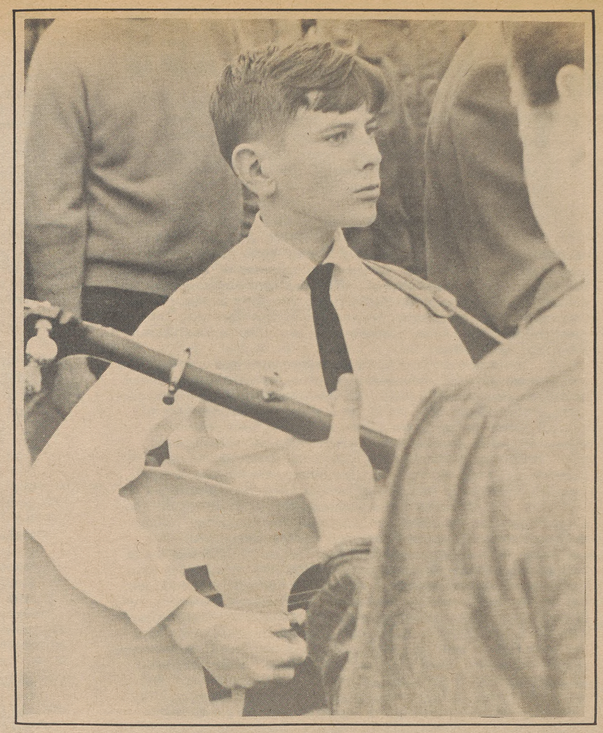
Anais Nin's work is attracting even more attention now than when Volume I was published several years ago, because both the confessional style of the Diaries and the subject of woman are popular today. This is good; it must lead to our discovery of her not only as a woman who is a writer, but as a writer who is an artist. For Anais Nin conceives of the novel not as the entertainment which proliferates today, but as an art form like painting, music and poetry. That she chose the psyche of woman as her subject glorifies her art.

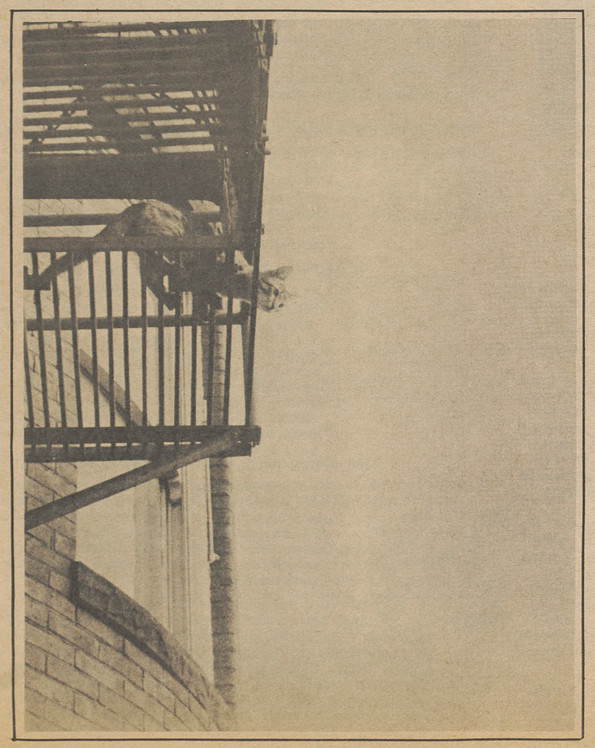
* * * * *

Photos

Jessie Winch







at the movies

The Washington Reviewing Society

THE LAST PICTURE SHOW
SUNDAY, BLOODY SUNDAY
ZATOICHI MEETS YOJIMBO
THE TROJAN WOMEN
FAMILY LIFE
200 MOTELS

All right, Clockwork Orange! Where are you? That's supposed to be a clever imitation of Warner Wolf, Washington's answer to Howard Cossell. At any rate, it seems we've been waiting forever for Kubrick's latest, which has been knocking over the critics (Best Film -- N.Y. Film Critics Award) in the Big City for some time now. Meanwhile, we've solaced ourselves with The Last Picture Show, Peter Bogdonovich's evocation of West Texan life in the early fifties.

It seemed to me to be two movies rolled into one, a period piece on the one hand and a sensitive and understated documentary of life in Texas, on the other. The period aspect of the film seemed accurate enough, but I didn't get much of the feeling of the fifties out of it. Having grown up in that decade, I am one of the many millions of experts on the period which has only recently been certified as authentic camp. There is something compulsive in our desire for nostalgia; our inevitable sanctification of a decade the moment it's over. What meaning are we searching for -- or evading -- in this relentless backward look? Whatever the meaning, I think it's lost whenever camp rears its chic head. Camp might be too frivolous a word to apply to Messires Bogdanovich and McMurtry's treatment of the fifties; in fact, I think they could have used a little more frivolity and a little less research as they pound the viewer over the head with all the artifacts of the decade: one old Merc after another, seemingly thousands of cornball greasers and their dates, gunsnapping ancestresses of our teenyboppers with skirts just the right millimeter above their white socks with the fuzzy tops -- and Hank Williams! Even the Bucolic Bard's most ardent admirers must have lost heart as the Country Preacher (or was that Jimmy Rodgers ?) makes his nasal way through just about every song in his repertoire in the course of the film. The point I thought I was making, and apparently haven't yet, is that my impression of West Texas is that it -- and much of the South -- and the North -- is still living in the fifties, in substance, if not in artifact. I wonder if the film might not have been stronger if it had been updated to the sixties so that we could have avoided the feeling that we were seeing ourselves as we might appear in a glass case at the Smithsonian. My personal feeling is that the period aspect of the film got in the way of the humanity of THE LAST PICTURE SHOW, which is considerable. Instead of appearing as a separate entity, period should merge with place and people. But the evocation of West Texas was, I thought, superb. Shots of the small town, the highway, the Texas countryside at dusk and dawn, form a compelling string of images that will remain with me for a long time. It is that aspect of the film which promises the essentially indefinable meaning of "America" for me, not the painstaking recreation of an era that is still too much with us to get in proper perspective.

Sunday, Bloody Sunday I found to be a Bore, Bloody Bore. OK, Davey Marlin-Jones, you're not the only guy who can do it! Sensible, sophisticated, civilized, tasteful, well-photographed, well acted, well-written, but Ho-Hum, so what. People, I've found, responded to the film in the same proportion that they responded to the character of the "sculptor", a youth who is the love object (in his case, object is an accurate word) of a career woman (Glenda Jackson) and a middle-aged doctor (Peter Finch) I personally found the sculptor -- as interpreted by actor Murry Head -- to be totally unbelievable as either a character or a love-object. Those who found him plausible and even attractive -- in my experience, a tiny minority of sex-starved young women and most film critics -- thought the film to be rather fine. As Head plays it, the character is a shallow youth with a body divine whose entire schtick seems to consist of creating pseudo art in order to fleece the guillible American collectors. Although it is common knowledge that love is blind, it stretches credulity to the breaking point when we are asked to believe that a woman of the world in the Jeanne Moreau sense (Glenda Jackson, no doubt, is growing weary of that comparison) would find such a character lovable. I found Finch's attachment to the creature more possible, a value judgement likely to rase the hackles of the Gay Liberation. Possible, perhaps, but hardly plausible. It is not unlikly to imagine that both the working woman and the doctor could find the body divine diverting enough to while a weekend away between the sheets with -- but as an object of their love? Hardly. The pacing of the film is so low-key as to become monotonous; so much so that the most ordinary event begins to take on all kinds of momentous drama; the running over of a dog, for example, assumes enourmous significance, a bar-mitzvah scene (which is an excellent set-piece) has all the pomp of a coronation, and the sculpter's decision to go to America has everyone just about committing suicide.

The film's weaknesses and strengths, it seems to me, are precisely John Schlesinger's weaknesses and strengths as a director. He's a director who does well with his actors and, in most of his movies, the actors give excellent performances. One recalls Jon Voight's part in Midnight Cowboy, Julie Christie's in Far From The Madding Crowd, and Peter Finch's in this film, the best of his career, most critics agree. Schlesinger is also good at evoking period; The New York of Midnight Cowboy and the Hardy flavor of Far From The Madding Crowd and the sights and sounds of contemporary London in Sunday, Bloody Sunday. It's the everyday London of the everyday citizen, not the rather mannered London that Antonioni depicted in Blow-Up. People's life-styles -- the way they dress, the houses and rooms they live in, the cars they drive, the things they eat, the streets they walk -- all seem eminently believable and unforced in distinct contrast to the strident reaction of the fifties as presented by Bogdanovich in The Last Picture Show. If Schlesinger's strengths are also the strengths of the film, his weaknesses are why the film fails. He seems to have an almost uncanny knack for taking the tension out of any situation. He's a balloon-deflator, and I think it's because directing comes too easy for him. He knows all the tricks of the trade -- any given Schlesinger scene will have any number of effortless cuts, wipes, fades, dissolves, sound-on-sound and other effects -- but he doesn't seem able to use them to forward his art. Take the Terence Stamp "sword seduction" scene in Far From The Madding Crowd , for example. Stamp plays a dashing sergeant who wins and woos Julie Christie with a bravura display of reckless swordsmanship. Most competent directors would have turned this scene into a tour-de-force of machismo; Schlesinger gives us a virtuoso lesson in the art of using a camera to gut a scene of its significance. Every ounce of technique seems designed to call attention to the technique instead of the content of the scene. Similarly, Midnight Cowboy despite its strong story line, becomes just another commercial tear-jerker and Far From The Madding Crowd, eviscerated in the end by these tricks, winds up just another costume piece. And Sunday, Bloody Sunday,which could have been enlightening on that most difficult of contemporary themes, modern love, ends up as a rather monotonous soap opera.

Zatoichi Meets Yojimbo, currently playing at Outer Circle 2, stars two legends of Japanese films, the redoubtable Toshiro Mifune and an actor who is a legend in Japan, but rarely, if ever, seen here, Shintaru Katsu. Unfortunately for this film, the other part of the Mifune legend is missing -- Akira Kurosawa. If ever a film cried out for a great director, it is this one. Even a good one would have helped. As it is, Zatoichi Meets Yojimbo is an insult to Kurosawa because it trades on the very elements which he raised to a stunning art-form: Mifune's brilliance as an actor, the genre of the Samurai film, and, in particular, the reputation of the earlier Mifune/Kurosawa film classic, Yojimbo. A further insult because it is not even based on the real Yojimbo, but rather, a Yojimbo - inspired bastardization, Sergio Leone's spaghetti western, A Fistful of Dollars. It's a film which inspires particular virulence, not only because I revere Kurosawa and am saddened by his recent suicide attempt, but because of the great film it could have been under Kurosawa's direction. Here's a man, a genius of film, who's apparently impoverished and out-of-work, and here's a film that seems eminently suited for his talents. Why didn't the two get together ?

In a word, or a hundred or so, the movie is a grade B Samuai flick which despite the best efforts of the director, contains two sterling performances by two distinguished actors. Try to imagine, if you will, Sir Lawrence Olivier and Paul Scofield in a film directed by Russ Meyer and you will get some idea of this film's innate rottenness. Strong words, but every time I think of Kurosawa in a hospital bed, I am tempted to use stronger ones. The direction, the photography (believe it or not, by Kaque Miyagawa, the photographer of Rashomon) and the action sequences are utterly insipid and routine. Yojimbo and The Seven Samurai were prime examples of how a director can turn physical action into a metaphysical statement; Zatoichi Meets Yojimbo is a classic example of the way to turn physical action into a Mack Sennett comedy routine. The group swordplay is unbelievable; I am now convinced of a fact I heretofor thought impossible: a samurai blade can pass through a human body without damage to either sword or flesh. I knew that samuais were mighty, but noone told me they were magicians. Not only bodies, but heads. I saw more than one sword whistle through a neck without upsetting the equilibrius of the head. Well, let's forget the non-direction perpetrated by one Kihachi Okamoto, creator of such films as Sword of Doom and Kill, and dwell, for the moment, on violence.

There is violence in films, and then there is violence. And very rarely, there, there is real violence. I mean physical violence; we all know that films afford us countless examples of mental violence. There is Sergio Leone Violence, a mindless kind of indicriminate maiming and killing characterized by a complete absence of sensibility and an overabundance of pseudo gore. The result is anti-violent; violence which is so stylized and removed from cause as to seem almost serene. There is Stuntman Violence, long used by Hollywood and TV, which again seems unrelated to cause, and more a display of calisthenic skill than an activity with intent to harm. There is Russ Meyer Violence, a subgenre of Horror Flick Violence. Meyer Violence is notable for a sensational lack of taste; apart from mentally violating the viewer with its psychopathic qualities, it seems as divorced from reality as are the other specimens. Beyond The Valley of The Dolls is a fine example of this kind of violence. The one common characteristic of all these types of violence is that they are not violent. Real violence is very rare on the screen, violence which intends to hurt and kill, violence which is angry, violence which proceeds from a human desire to injure. There is incredible violence in Brando's death scene in Viva Zapata. There is real violence in Bonnie and Clyde, Violence which seems to have one object: to hurt and kill the people involved. The last scene in Easy Rider is full of a restrained vilence that shocks, a violence that gives one a sense of loss. The two suicides in Nicholas Roeg's Walkabout are truly violent.

In Zatoichi Meets Yojimbo, the violence is of the Leone variety, random, indicriminate, totally and unintentionally comic. Another abominable Leonism perpertrated by the film is a horrible use of music. One is always cued as to when the humor is ending (that broad, burlesque variety that, for some reason, the Japanese find funny) and the serious stuff beginning by the turgid swell of the music; still, it's rather pleasant music, and not nearly as bad as those lugubrious rattles and banshee wails that for no apparent reason fill the plains of the Italian Western from illogical time to time.

The acting, as I indicated before, is the only saving grace of this otherwise dismal film. Shinharu Katsu, veteran of 24 Japanese films, plays an ex-samurai gone blind; Mifune plays a role he has done to perfection many times before: the somewhat seedy samurai who, despite hard knocks, retains his dignity and above all, his machismo. Katsu plays his man as a human being with flesh and blood foibles and strengths; Mifune gives his man a taste of myth, of legend, a hint of the ideal. The two in apposition make

for the finest display of film acting I've seen in a long time. Katsu is a blind swordsman who can divide a coin in two just by the sound it makes in the air. He is also a rogue, a saint, and a clown and he makes these qualities -- including his blindness -- eminently believable. James Franciscus should sit at the feet of this actor if he wants to learn to play a blind man. Mifune's performance is fascinatingly temporal; he begins as a sake-besotted mercenary and evolves into a still-invincible swordfighter who retains his dignity and courage despite incredible adversities. I sincerely hope that a good director will reunite these two in a vehicle more worthy of their talents. And, I shouldn't forget to mention the swordplay of the two principles. When Mifune or Katsu wield a samurai sword, one is absolutely convinced that this is the way the best Samurai fought. It is quick, bloody and beautifully stylized. It is a style of swordfighting that makes the duels of Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. seem effeminite in comparison. And I must not forget the female lead, Ayoko Wakeo, who convincingly departs from the usual stereotype of the Geisha with a fine performance. She is also stunningly beautiful. Notice, I made no mention of the plot of Zatoichi Meets Yojimbo. The title says it all. It is one of th those incredibly complex plots, the understanding of which is completely unessential to the film.

Perhaps in answer to AFI's recent Polish series, Circle Theater is putting on its own mini-Polish festval. That is, it is about to run a series of horror films, a good many of which appear to be Roman Polanski's. Particularly recommended are Cul-de-sac (Jan. 16-17) and Night of The Living Dead (Jan. 20-22) which I hope to review soon in this space.

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Mark Power

TROJAN WOMEN

When Euripides presented The Trojan Women in competition in 415 B.C., he was awarded only second prize. Michael Cacoyannis, who has directed other excellent adaptations of Greek tragedy for cinema, also falls short of his best work with this revival.

The Trojan Women is a group tragedy; it is concerned with the destruction and disappearance of the city of Troy. The central character, Hecuba, is revealed as a symbol of the city and its culture. All action revolves around Hecuba; she is mother, queen, and leader. She is also the reasonner attempting to clarify the absurdity of the war and to question existence. Katherine Hepburn has admirably captured the multitudinous aspects of Hecuba. Without destroying the emotive tension of the movie, Miss Hepburn covinces one of the nobility of the effort.

The play is comprised of long speeches. They are written extremely well and are delivered beautifully. Sometimes, they resemble arias in a spoken opera.

There is no comfortable plot into which the comfortable viewer can escape. The Trojan War is over; we do not even see the legendary Greek heroes. There is only Hecuba and the Trojan women as they await their fate. Hecuba is the one who will know and suffer most. That is the plot: a catalogue of injustice and degradation.

Hecuba's daughter, Cassandra, is to be taken by a Greek king, Agamemnon, as his concubine. Cassandra, the maddened priestess and prophet of Apollo, is well played by Genevieve Bujold. The interaction between Cassandra and Hecuba is extremely well handled. During certain intervals, though, faulty camera movement destroys the harmony of her characterization.

Andromache, the wife of Hector -- who is the son of Hecuba -- is seen riding upright in a small cart with her son and her husband's armor. Her husband had been the mightiest of Troy and she, herself, is reknown among the women of Troy for her virtues. Vanessa Redgrave deliniates Andromache with such power and expressivness that the sinews of this ideal heroine vibrate with life. Andromache is engulfed by misfortunes, yet Redgrave shows the grandeur of her spirit, rising above her personal catastrophy. When Andromache, who was awarded to another Greek king, wishes for death, Hecuba's arguments persuade her to live and to hope. Then, a messenger comes with the order for the death of her son. Escape is impossible and she faints. When she awakes, her child is gone and she can only mount the cart with her husband's armour. Redgrave's exit is an amazing example of how a series of small actions can be used effectively to express a myriad feelings.

When Hecuba encounters Menelaus -- the husband of Helen she is seeking revenge. He, who has spent ten years in trying to destroy the walls of Troy to reach his adulterous wife, promises death for Helen. Helen is brought forth and Hecuba demands that she acquit herself. The cunning Helen, the perfect courtesean, played by Irene Pappas, completely sabotages all plans but her own. Pappas carefully keeps this role under control; it could have easily been played for comedy. A haughty Helen offers the Trojan women a hope for revenge. Helen's instinct is a strange foil to Hecuba's reasonings. Helen swoons during the argument and it becomes obvious that nothing will happen to her.

The burial of Andromache's son should be the strongest emotional scene, and it almost is. Hecuba's funeral oration is very moving, with the boy's epitaph; "Here lies a little child the Greeks killed, because they feared him." Her effort to absorb the absurdity of war reaches a climax in this scene. With the burial of the child, the hopes for the city are destroyed. The city is fired and the women are led away: but that does not matter now. It is absurd for Hecuba to try to throw herself into the flames... a puerile and cliched false ending.

The movie fails because of a number of decisions made by the director. Each mistake would have been minor if it were not compounded by the others.

In Greek Tragedy, the spring has to be kept taut, or the meaning becomes slack. The use of camera movement to provide a sense of physical movement is unnecessary. The emotive movement should have sufficed. It seems that the director could not trust his actresses' abilities to express emotion during the long speeches; their performances prove him wrong. It is difficult to work with long speeches in any medium, but there are other solutions than "dramatic" camera work. Ideally, a rhythm, based on division of the body, could be used; full length shots for the beginnings of speeches with close-ups to the face and/or hands for the climax of a scene. The camera could swing slowly around the actress to change the backround image. Anything else would have done providing that the fluidity of the actresses' expressions were respected. A conflict between the camera as a tool for the visual art and the integrity of the actresses as artists was never resolved This conflict seriously weakens Cassandra's speech.

There are elements of live theatre which run counter to the basic acting in the movie. Modern stage acting often calls for postures which attempt to shift the body from the human form to abstract form. Cacoyannis uses this device -- incorrectly, in my opinion -- several times. It is necessary to have a unity of acting to maintain tension. (Movies seem to have been left with the burden of realism, the other arts, having escaped, can return to it with fresh perceptions.) The handling of the chorus is faulty on several occassions, apparently because Cacoyannis used solutions from theatre. He shifts from a realistic pattern of movement to a artificially choreographed one. This shift can work well -- as in Marate-Sade -- if there is a firm purpose for avoiding realism, or reminding the viewer that he is watching a movie. Some of the scenes in Trojan Women resembles amateur musicals.

The use of colour was a bad choice for this film. The colours are not even related to the substance of the film and, often, conflict with it. It is almost impossible to believe that there had been a war, especially one that lasted for ten years. There is a curious sequence at the beginning of the film wherein a group of women are led around the city walls. The action freezes and then switches to black and white. Why? The motif is not continued elsewhere in the film. There is a shot of Redgrave, which would make an incredibly beautiful still. Unfortunately, it occurred at the wrong moment and weakened part of her speech.

Cacoyannis, in his past films, notably Electra, has worked extremely well in black and white. In the earlier films, there is a sense that the actors are a part of the earth. The choruses seemed to have sprung from the earth. This action should have been repeated. As it now stands, the use of colour forces a separation between actors and their environment. They are trapped and isolated between earth and sky. The chorous is weakened considerably through the director's efforts to scatter it on the image plane. This works in black and white, but not in colour. Here, the members look merely like drabs.

review by William Metcalfe

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POLISH FILM: AFI

The American Film Institute has been doing some very fine things lately. Last issue, we wrote about their film festival series and the superb Cuban film Inconsolable Memories (Memories of Underdevelopment). This month, they've been showing a series on the Polish film that is also truly excellent. At this point I can only hope that this showing of films from "Iron Curtain" countries is a trend that will continue in the future. As an extra bonus, Mical Webb and the AFI also brought with the current film series some real live Polish film directors and actors. Hopefully, this sort of thing will also continue. I got to talk to the director Krzysztof Zanussi at a reception at the Polish embassy last week. Zanussi is considered Poland's new up-and-coming "young" (he's 31) director, and has made several feature length films. He started out as a physicist, turned philosopher, and recently ended up in filmaking by way of the Polish film school at Lodz, where he was a classmate of Roman Polanski. After several glasses of wine, Zanussi and I sort of drifted together and got to talk a bit. Some quick thoughts from Zanussi:

------- Amazement at American film distribution. Complete lack of Cuban, Russian, and Polish films. Poland imports films from all over the world. Especially into old American westerns, though they do get a good selection of contemporary American films.

------- Considers the Cuban Memories of Underdevelopment a very fine film, but since then (four years ago) the Cuban film industry has fallen to pieces because of heavy corruption in all areas.

------- Likes American directors Kazan, Zinnemann, recently Bagdonovich, though he feels that Last Picture Show is not a "universal" film in that young Poles will not identify with the fifties scene indigenous to American culture.

------- Liked Easy Rider, but felt that Hopper's Last Movie was very bad and will not be shown in Poland.

About this time, Zanussi was taken away by some official type which was all right by me as I was beginning to feel the effects of the several Polish Vodkas I had consumed. By the way, Polish Vodka is very fine stuff... another product unobtainable in America

That night, we went to see Zanussi's film Family Life. From what we could gather, the film is typical of many new Polish films by young directors in that it deals with young people and their problems with the older generation. Extremely introspective and brooding, the film was long and involved. A young engineer who has broken away from his family and taken a job in a modern factory is called home because his father is dying. The rest of the film takes place in the home which is crumbling, an old mansion set in among modern high rise apartments. The father is an old factory owner who can't understand his son who has come to embody the new vlaues. The movie is extremely long and drawn out, but it seems to work in a highly cerebral manner. The star is Daniel Olbrychski who is Poland's number one male actor. Olbrychski is a Polish James Dean with the same brooding style and the same pretty-boy looks. Zanussi spoke again after the film, but by this time, the remnants of the vodka had completely wiped me out and I had to go home.

I felt the film to be very good in many ways, not the least of which is that the film gave me -- and I'm sure others, as well— a look at what Poland is like in these times. Being insulated as we are, in this country, I find that even though I know better, intellectually, I find myself referring to these mysterious countries in a very stereotyped manner. Without propagandizing, the film shows you that things, good things, are going on over there and we don't know a damn thing about them. Again, hats off to Michael Webb and his crew at AFI for doing something about this insensitivity on our part.

And now, hats back on to the AFI for a moment. A few words of warning. If you go to the AFI without a car, don't expect to get home without hitch-hiking. You cannot get a cab even if you call one. The bus stop (people there are extremely vague about the times the buses run) is located on D Street in this wierd science fiction area protected by about a million high-crime lights And you know what that means. If they need that much light to push back the night, then your life isn't worth a plugged nickle after five thirty. While we were standing outside, trying to figure out what to do, an elderly Pole came out of the theatre and asked "Which way is...Washington?" We knew that if we were in trouble, then this guy was in deep trouble. By some stroke of sheer luck, a cab came by, dropping someone off at the garage, and we got everyone safely home, but I don't recommend chancing it. There must be somebody, somewhere, who can figure out how to get you out of there. If Michael Webb can get the Poles to America, I'll bet he could figure out a way to get the Washingtonians back to Washington. How about it, Michael?

Unfortunately, by the time that this comes out, most of the films will have been shown, but you can still catch a few of them. On Jan. 11, is Landscape After Battle, starring the inimitable Olbrychski. On Jan. 12, is Behind the Wall, a film about characters living, as they say, "lives of quiet desperation", and with a shorter film, Passenger, by the famous director Andrzej Munk, but unfinished at the time of his death in 1961. The film was later pieced together by some of Munk's close friends. And, on Thursday the 13th, we have Gangsters and Philanthropists, a two part comedy about gangsters and others, Polish style. The movies all start at eight o'clock, but get there at seven thirty as the line can be a problem.

The next series at AFI is A Tribute to Henry Fonda, from Jan. 14 - 18. The schedule is: Jan. 14, Twelve Angry Men, and The Oxbow Incident: Jan. 15, Grapes of Wrath: Jan 16*, get this folks, Henry Fonda In Person. Henry will introduce excerpts from some of his films and rap to the audience: Jan 17, Mr. Roberts: and Jan. 18, The Best Man.

(* --- Admission will be charged this night)

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review by Allan Appel

TWO HUNDRED MOTELS

To analyze Two Hundred Motels is to analyze the mind of Frank Zappa, which may approach the impossible. One must write about what he has seen, felt, and what has driven him halfway from his seat in hysterical laughter and panic. Zappa has provided his audience with a glimpse of what he sees the world around him to be. That world is you -- incongruous scenes flip you around inside your head while splashing your eyes with a composite of primary colored distortions. Centerville (A nice place to raise your kids) becomes a town of checkerboard streets and wavy lines that surround the people as they sing and dance.

Wance Mohametz (what kind of fucking name is that?!) marches around from scene to scene dressed in an overly done military costume, carring a brief case that steams from cheeseburgers and Prebble beer. At other times, Wance changes into a suit and becomes the commentator of an absurd game show.

The action throughout is so fast that it becomes extremely hard to remember the film. The beginning is difficult to place and the ending is impossible to remember.

The same guy who showed up twice (I guess twice) sitting at a table saying "I just want to know two things... where's the beer and when do we get paid?" later is dressed as a red neck cowboy, singing "Bertram the Redneck" with verses like"

I'm Bertram the Redneck
speaking at ya
in my old blue cowboy shirt
reeking at ya
come into my place
and I'll buy you a taste
you can sit on my face
wher's the waitress?

The rest of the song is impossible to remember, but Bertram was singing it in a bar where the characters were wearing hard hats and masks that covered half their faces.

The sequence and "plot" of the film get so entangled that it becomes increasingly hard to convey Zappa's message, or even decide what it really is. That he make an incredible comment on America is evident, but the way he does it leaves your mind in complete chaos.

The film was supposed to be about "Touring, ladies and gentlemen, can make you crazy." and that's the way it went. I kept falling out of my seat as a guy dressed as a nun (really a groupie) gets goosed as he is chased through the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra or is O.D.'ing on downers.

A lot of the movie takes the form of your subconscious or you become part of its subconscious.

The guys in the band tal k about Frank watching them and making them do things and "Who is he anyway?"

It is just not possible to describe the action in this movie. It is three things: your subconscious, dreaming, and being stoned. After seeing the thing twice, I'm still flashing on it... the songs, the stereotypes, the places.

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SECOND THOUGHTS

Allen Appel

For anyone involved with movies in any way, the end of the year is a time of madness. The studios and exhibitors are ramming their top films down the public's collective throat, desperately trying to win the holiday market. The reviewers are trying to wade through the year's mishmash, putting it into orderly ten-best lists and generally make sense out of what's going on. The result seems to be that bad films get drubbed, mediocre films get lost, and mere good films become great. At some point we ought to stop and try to sort things out a bit.

The top films of the year seemed to fit neatly into several catagories. Perhaps the newest catagory to win critical acclaim is that of the "tasteful" film. This is a film about reasonable, intelligent people doing whatever it is they do, but having it presented to us in a tasteful, intelligent manner. I call these the "Reasonably Intelligent, But Mostly Boring Films". The prime winners in this catagory are MY NIGHT AT MAUDES, CLAIRE'S KNEE, and SUNDAY, BLOODY SUNDAY. A special award in the comedy area goes to the Reasonably Tasteful IS THERE SEX AFTER DEATH? MY NIGHT AT MAUDE'S was about some people having a conversation, CLAIRE'S KNEE, about a cedidedly low-key non-love affair involving a man with a peculiar, but tasteful, little fetish. SUNDAY BLOODY SUNDAY was about a doctor who is a homosexual (most people think there's a law about that sort of thing) and IS THERE SEX AFTER DEATH was a marvelous little spoof, all in good taste, by that marvelous little hoaxer Alan Abel. The latter film, from now on, referred to as ITSAD, has to go down as the stupidest film of the year. As a man who likes a good laugh now and again and who goes for some skin in his movies, I went to that movie with reasonably high expectations. I sat in amazement as people all around me in the theatre yukked, guffawed and jumped up and down in their seats at the silly little stupid jokes in the show. And there wasn't even any good skin in it. To all those good critics who praised this piece of boring trash, I hope they die with their leers glued to their faces.

The other big category this year was the genre film, but with the "tell it like it really is/was" twist. A chief biggy here was McCABE and MRS. MILLER. Now, this was a good film, but it certainly wasn't a great one. I did like the sets with all those real looking people slogging around in the mud, saying real sounding things, and Julie Chrisie certainly is a fine looking Woman, but I think the plot was a little on the light-weight side to qualify it as art. Also in this category, we have THE FRENCH CONNECTION. Again, I thought that this was a very good movie, but merely showing people (cops) and cities (New York) as they really are and throwing in a Bullit-type chase scene doesn't seem to me to be enough to warrant the ecstatic ravings that came out after this picture was released. Even some Woodwind reviewers went a bit overboard on that one. And last, but certainly not least, was the genre film that created its own genre, THE LAST PICTURE SHOW.

Now that the smoke screen of press hype has cleared away, it's time to take a second look. Peter Bagdonovich in THE LAST PICTURE SHOW, seems to me to have produced a particularly superiour act of magic. By keeping us totally involved in one aspect -- the detailed, almost nitpicking representation of the fifties -- we become completely unaware that the chief elements of the film, characterization and plot, are exceedingly shallow and two dimensional. The present trend of nostalgia sets the stage perfectly for Bagdonovich and he played his receptive audience brilliantly. Deftly supplying the memory cues, he tricked us into filling in his characters with our own rememberances of that particular time. And while we're at it, does anyone really think that the fifties were so great? Do you really remember with fondness getting stomped by the Duanes, not getting laid by the Jacey's, and believing that the Korean "conflict" was a hero's war? I guess that the seventies are so crummy that we'll look back with fondness on anything. All in all, though, I guess it wasn't such a bad year. Does anyone remember THE CONFORMIST and WALKABOUT?

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COUNTERNOTES

BRUCE ROSENSTEIN

What follows is a short list of some of the better albums that were released in 1971. It was intentionally written to be printed after Christmas, because this is no shopping guide. It also skips most of the better known albums of the year and concentrates on lesser known stuff that hasn't gotten much attention.

BLACK OAK ARKANSAS (Atco) -- There just isn't enough one can say about this record. The boys are out touring with Grand Funk Railroad, which is no doubt an insult but it helped Humble Pie so who knows? BOA used to be a dreaded gang of juvenile delinquents who were nearly sent up the river for ripping off band equipment from their school. Named after their hometown, (they previously made an awful LP three years ago as the Knowbody Else on Hip Records) Black Oak has a lead singer who sings country music in a voice a shade meaner than Captain Beefheart. Buck Owens would puke. They use two lead guitars, and when they play hard rock, they don't mess around, as proved by their miraculous "Lord Have Mercy on My Soul/When Electricity Came to Arkansas". Their version of "Singing the Blues" is just corny enough to be great. "Hot and Nasty" is rock decadence at its best/worst. You may have a tendency to not take their country seriously at first because of the lead singer's growling, defiant voice, but after a while you get used to it. And their rocking is so authoritative that you just can't question their abilities. Apparently the world wasn't ready for Black Oak Arkansas in 1971, but their time has gotta come soon.

TEENAGE HEAD -- Flamin' Groovies -- (Kama Sutra) Nobody around today, including Creedence Clearwater Revival, can rock like the Groovies. This is their third album, and they moved farther away from '50's rock and roll to 70's hard rock and old blues. It contained the hit single that never was, Randy Newman's "Have You Seen My Baby", a slow slide guitar blues, "City Lights", and more modern rock like the title cut. There was also an old Robert Johnson song, "32-20". Lead singer Roy Loney outdid himself on a combination blues-shuffle-'50's rock "Dr. Boogie". I recently read that Loney may leave the band which would be a shame. His voice is exciting and distinctive and he's a damn good songwriter. Maybe it's the name or something, but I can't figure out why the Groovies have only gotten sporadic airplay. Not only is it great for FM radio but most of their music would lend itself to Top 40's play. "Have You Seen My Baby" would have been the ideal song to be blaring out of car speakers everywhere this summer. I don't think there is a rock critic around who doesn't love them, and all their albums have gotten excellent reviews. (The back cover of Teenage Head gives special thanks to a large list of rock critics, and Richard Meltzer is rumored to sing backup on one cut.) Probably the best album of the year.

GRATEFUL DEAD (Warner Bro's), NEW RIDERS OF THE PURPLE SAGE, (Columbia), JAMES AND THE GOOD BROTHERS (Columbia), HISTORIC DEAD (MGM). It is indeed curious that the general populace is starting to turn on to the Dead at their lowest point yet. Their new double live album is nice and pleasant, and gets going here and there, but it doesn't measure up to any of their other records, and yet it was their first million seller. Not only that, but the Dead are on their way to having a hit single! "Truckin'" has been cut down by two minutes, and I believe also re-recorded, and it looks like it's going to be a big hit the second time around (it was first released as a single last Spring). Anyway, the live album has its moments, like the winding, chunky "Bertha", and "Wharf Rat", and neat versions of "Mama Tried" and "Me and My Uncle". It also had things like "Johnny B. Goode" and "Me and Bobby McGee" which got tiresome the first time around. This LP wasn't half of what Live Dead was, but I don't think anyone is all that worried. It seems that they've worked up a lot of new original material. They'll be back. 1971 was a good year for Dead offshoot groups, as The New Riders of the Purple Sage had a best selling album. However, James and The Good Brothers had a non-promoted, non-advertised album. The New Riders LP had Jerry Garcia on pedal steel guitar, (he's since been replaced by Buddy Cage) and lead singer Marmaduke (John Dawson) came up with some fine new songs for the band to work out on. His voice is quite similar to Garcia's, but I don't think he's trying to copy him. Most of the material is top-knotch, and one is destined to be a classic, "Last Lonely Eagle", written by Dawson and also recorded by Ian and Sylvia. "Louisiana Lady" was a minor hit single, but it's far from the best song on the album. It, like "Portland Woman" is rather ordinary -- "I Don't Know You" and "Glendale Train" are far better tunes. James and the Good Brothers produced a beautiful album which was more country than rock. In some ways, I like it better than the New Riders album. But for reasons that only Columbia Records must know, no one bothered to tell the public that it was out. If you are into country music, there's no reason why you shouldn't like it.

Historic Dead was ripped, er, released by MGM last Spring, consisting of four songs, all of it under a half hour total. The Dead didn't want this to be put out, and it's not hard to see why. It's not all that dynamic, and the recording quality is wretched. The main points of interest here are versions of "Stealin'" and Willie Dixon's "The Same Thing", mainly for some getting off by Jerry Garcia at the end of the twelve minute song. Also, the campy "lindy". On one level, it is nice to have these old tapes of the Dead available, but it's also too bad that they're getting burned by having their old, sub-par stuff released.

LOOKING ON, MESSAGE FROM THE COUNTRY -- The Move -- (Capitol). The Move is in the curious position of being worshipped in underground circles in the U.S., and considered a Top 40 pop group in their native England. The reason the situation exists in England is a throwback to the days when the Move destroyed cars on stage and turned out eminently catchy Top 40 hits. Although they've never clicked in this country, they have made three astounding albums within the past two years, starting with Shazam on A&M. Looking On and Message From The Country were both released within two months of each other this summer, the former, four months after its British release. Both are masterpieces in the hard rock vein. With their latest album they grew above hard rock being played by anyone, with the addition of oboes and celloes (celli ?) with the standard drums, bass, and guitar. The evolution which began on Looking On reached full blown maturity on Message From The Country. Looking On had rip roaring basic hard rock like "When Alice Comes Back to the Farm" and "Turkish Tram Conductor Blues", plus the start of their new sound with "What?" and "Open Up Said The World At The Door". Message was adorned with beauties like the title cut, which was penned by newcomer Jeff Lynne, with exquisite velvety harmonies. There were a few take-offs thrown in, including an Elvis tribute by drummer Bev Bevan and leader Roy Wood's fling at country music, plus an endlessly curious "When I'm Sixty-Four"-like ditty called "My Marge". But songs like "The Words of Aaron", "It Wasn't My Idea", and "Ella James" are the rock of the future. In order to finally rid the group of its pop image, Wood is in effect dropping the name The Move, and has expanded the concept of the latest album by adding two new members to concentrate on, among other things, violin, oboe, and cello, and named the new affair The Electric Light Orchestra. Their debut LP was just released in England and should hit the U.S. by March. Not too long after, Roy Wood should have a solo album. You may remember my incessant raving about the Move's fantastic single, "Tonight". It seems that the song has been covered by another British groub, those all-time heavies, those darlings of the underground, those progressive pop stars, The New Seekers! My stomach hasn't been strong enough lately to listen to their version, and I can't really say that I'm anxious. Maybe someday the original version will get on an LP. The Move, as always, were consistently wonderful in 1971.

ANGEL DELIGHT -- Fairport Convention - (A&M), IF YOU SAW THRO' MY EYES -- Ian Matthews - (Vertigo), LATER THAT SAME YEAR -- Matthews Southern Comfort - (Decca), FROG CITY -- Southern Comfort - (Capitol), PLEASE TO SEE THE KING -- Steeleye Span - (Big Tree), SOMETIMES -- Allan Taylor - (United Artists) A bumper crop for British folk music in 1971. Of all the albums listed above, the one which stays closest to British folk roots is by Steeleye Span. Their sound is basically Fairport Convention circa 1969. The similarity exists because lead singer Maddy Prior sounds a lot like SandyDenny; the group was actually formed by ex-Fairport bassist Tyger Hutchings. They play heavy, undiluted fold, with a couple of nice jigs, "Bryann O'Lynn" and "The Hag With Money", featuring fiddler Peter Knight. If you go in for old British folk, and dug Fairport's Liege and Lief, you should like this. Fairport's Angel Delight had a lot of heavy traditional type material, but fiddler Dave Swarbrick is being relied upon too much since the departure of Richard Thompson. The best thing on the album is a folk-rock type song, "Sickness and Diseases". Not a bad album, but far from Fairport at its strongest.

Allan Taylor used Dave Swarbrick plus Fairport counterparts Dave Pegg and Dave Mattacks as backup men for his debut LP, which is about half old British folk and half more contemporary folk. The title cut, which fits in the latter category, is especially nice. Actually, it is at times hard to tell that the Fairport people are playing backup; the main focus of the album is Allan's voice and guitar. My guess is that he will move away from traditional folk and get more into his own writing and maily more modern stuff. Watch for him.

Ian Mattew's solo album was beautiful, in a class with the first Matthews' Southern Comfort album. Playing with selected backup musicians, Ian concentrated on songwriting and came up with some good folk songs, and didn't touch on country music, much He seems to be having problems getting through to the public in this country, although he is quite popular in England. The closest he came to the big time was a hit with "Woodstock" from his last LP with Southern Comfort, Later That Same Year, ironically, shortly after that group broke up. That last LP was by far their most commercial, with things like a rocking version of Carole Kin's "To Love". The country element was strongly present, most notably in "Mare Take Me Home". But that album split the group into two camps, with Ian on one side and the band on the other. Southern Comfort, which desired to play more rock and country, decided to stay together for those purposes and hence recorded Frog City, an album which is hard to get excited about. The songs are all pleasant enough, but we've heard it all before. Some of them could be good singles. Definitley not the success story of the year. Ian desired to pursue quieter folk, and did so quite well, indeed, on If You Saw Thro' My Eyes. It was depressing to try and listen to Ian (with Andy Roberts and Richard Thompson) play an intense, low-keyed set to the rude, babbling teenyboppers at the Wheaton Youth Center, which is no acoustic delight to begin with. His album could have been the biggest of the year. Even though it wasn't, it was certainly the best in British folk in 1971.

SIMPSON -- (Columbia) You may have some trouble in finding this one. Apparently record stores are allergic to it, DJ's are unaware of its existence, and Columbia seems to want to make it a collector's item by not telling anyone about it. If you do run across it, you'll find some of the best country songs with great lyrics, played tastefully by an acoustic band. Bland Simpson group consists of piano, acoustic guitar, bass, and drums. Electric guitar is used sparingly, and rock is only used a couple of times. It doesn't take long to get into, and what you hear stays there. More people should be experiencing his lyrics. This LP is probably in the Woolworths' Bargain Bin for $1.69 or so, and a fate like that is tragic and undeserving for someone as tatlented as Bland Simpson.

Now a rundown on some of the better hard-rock releases of 1971.

BAD MANORS -- Crowbar - (Paramount) This is right up there as one of the best LP's of the year. Actually, it is impossible to label the album, because it uses so many different forms of music -- hard rock, soul, country, jazz, and boogie-woogie and gospel thrown in for good measure. And they are tight as can be. Their sense of good times and sense of humor is unparalleled. Bad Manors has yodels, shouts, short intrumental "Frenchman's Fillers" throughout the album, and driving hard rock, roudy country, and a healthy amount of boogie. Get it and have a good time.

WET WILLIE -- (Capricorn) If you saw them rock at Emergency, you know how good they are. Their album is raunchy as hell and although sometimes -- especially live -- they come on too much like the J. Geils Band, they are one of the freshest rock bands to surface in a while. Check out the rock treatment of Jim Reed's "Shame, Shame, Shame", the ballad "Faded Love", and the fiery "Spinning Around". Rolling Stone, in its review of the album said that you really can't take lines like "I was sunk by a hunk of yo ur funk" seriously. Of course you can't. And that's the point and the basis of much of their appeal. You don't have to take Wet Willie seriously to like them.

REDWING -- (Fantasy) A good, unpretensious hard rock album heavily influenced by the Sun Records sides of the fifties like early Elvis and Carl Perkings. They had a semi-hit with a blistering version of Jimmie Rodger's classic "California Blues". There is a country influence to the album, but they never really get into total country playing. They do Mickey Newberry's "Baby Why You Been Gone So Long", one of the most beautiful and most often recorded songs today, but it is given a rock treatment. They really get going on "I'm Your Lover Man", which is built around the "Hey Bo Diddley" shave and a haircut -- two bits chords. Redwing is tastefully eclectic, but most of all they're a lot of fun.

KLATU BERRADA NIKTU -- The Dependables - (United Artists)

"The Dependables" --- Ralph Stec and Joey Scala chose that name because they wanted to come up with a '50's sounding name. Unfortunately, it seems to be more of a drawback. But, never mind. Ralph and Joey, formerly a part of the Los Angeles-Leon Russell family of musicians, have recruited the services of Claudia Lennear for backing vocals, bassist Carl Radle of the Tulsa Tops, and drummer Chuck Blackwell, of the Shelter People, and the result is a great album with a lot of rock, good horn-driven soul things, and old rock and roll and country. I hesitate in this day and age to call anyone or anything funky, but possibly no other word sums up the band better. "Loving You More" is well done, commercialism at its best. "Give Me Love" is grand old rock and roll. "Don't Blame Me" is pedal steel sweet country. Leon Russell fans should turn to this in droves.

INDELIBLY STAMPED -- Supertramp - (A & M) A promising British rock band. There are lots of treats in this album. "Potter is described by the band in the liner notes as a "crude piece of British rock". It's that and more. Supertramp doesn't just rely on lead guitar heavy rock to get its point across. "Aries" os a ni ce jazz piece, and most of the album is not nearly as heavy as "Potter", which is not to say that it's not as good. The cover showing a number of colorful tattooes on a woman's body seems to have turned some people off. Or, maybe they're just looking at the cover in the record stores cause they sure ain't buying it, which is too bad. With all the lousy noise that's coming out of England, why can't a really good band like Supertramp make it?

POETRY PERFORMANCE

Mac Wellman
Harvey Fry
Mark Power
Dede Baldwin
Peter Noterman
Milton Crocker
Michael Lally
Lester Blackiston
8:30 p.m. Wed. Jan. 12
Corcoran Auditorium
(New York Ave entrance)

PERFORMANCE

Openings:

The House of Blue Leaves by John Guare opens Wed. Jan. 12 at the Kreeger.

Lemon Sky by Lanford Wilson opens Wed. Jan. 12 at Washington Theater Club.

Note: Juno and the Paycock, the great Sean O'casey play, is now playing at the Hartke Theater, Catholic University, in a fine sensitive production. If you like naturalism, I urge you to see this production. Space allowances and deadlines have put off a longer review until next issue.

MAROTTS DE PARIS By LA COMPAGNIE ANDRÉ TAHON
at the National Theatre
and

ECHOES OF THE LEFT BANK

at Ford's Theatre

IT WAS A GALLIC OCCASION last week, with the openings of Marottes de Paris, Echoes of the Left Bank, and Marcel Marceau, but I can only report on two of the activities since Marceau opened at the Kennedy Center and Woodwind is currently banned from Kennedy Center performances.

Andre Tahon's spectacular puppet show, featuring Marottes, or puppets-on-a-stick, such as court jesters used to shake in royal faces, is diverting, at times entracing, and largely a happy experience. For some reason, it is suggested that the show is for adults, and not children, and while it is for adults, it is also definitely a fine entertainment for children.

The first half hour of the performance is curiously dull; what seemed to move the audience during this time was the costuming and changes of hats. Tahon briefly introduced the puppets, lifting up their skirts to explain their construction, and while he charmed the audience in his few moments on stage, it took the puppets considerably longer to get warmed up and into an interesting number.

Papotin, the chief puppet, proclaiminng himself "the real star of the show", was particularly noticable for his dependence on costuming, for which he solicited applause, and for his lack of real wit though he served very usefully as an MC introducing the various numbers. By the end of the first half of the show, fortunately, a genuinely enjoyable mouse-fest danced to the "Mozart Cha-Cha" with seemingly impossible numbers of mouse puppets came to pass, with an interesting "Russian Dance" a little earlier on.

Expecting a little more in the second half of the program, we got it, including a fine demonstration of the "Russian Dance" in front of the curtain with perfectly poised puppeteers working the puppets. My favorite number of the evening, the Strip Tease by Fifi-la-Plume, was more astonishing than any live strip tease by a human; what, after all, can a stick puppet strip to?

Billed as a musical spectacle in 22 scenes, it really is such a spectacle, and very like a Las Vegas revue, with the modesty of Radio City Music Hall. The orchestra provides good support for the production numbers, under the direction of Michel Brandt, and again I preferred, above all others, the burlesque strip number as played by the orchestra, but I acknowledge the versatility of the musicians as they slip from Grieg to folk dances, from Mozart to oriental influences.

THREE BLOCKS AWAY, at Ford's Theater, the French festivities were a little less buoyant, and a good deal more forced. Though Echoes of the Left Bank is billed as a show featuring the songs of Jacques Brel, Monnot, Becaud, LeGrande and Aznavour, it is really a new Jacques Brel evening, like Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris, though this should probably be called, Jacques Brel is Alive and Overworked, reflecting the tired and dated nature of the staging.

A company of five singers carry us through twenty-five songs in the course of the evening, seventeen of which are by Brel, none of which are by Monnot and Becaud, and three of which are by composers not mentioned, Dumont, Trenet and Clavi. My own favorite French songwriter is Charles Aznavour and we get only two undistinguished songs by him and two songs by Michel LeGrande including the often played film theme, "Windmills of Your Mind".

While each of the performers has some vocal talent, only Danielle Odderra, a French-Canadian performer, seemed to me to deliver any of the promised left bank "echoes" in her fine traditional chanteuse renditions, particularly of the French lyrics.

The other performers, never much shining in the group renditions, did come into some nice moments on their own, though the staging was pretty flat. Jamie Thomas particularly scored with a dizzying version of "Carousel" by Brel, and Harrison Somers provided strength and energy for such songs as "The Port of Amsterdam" though he wasn't given much direction for his actions.

The French lyric tradition in popular music is much older than the American lyricism which has begun to develop, and it would be nice to see a good evening of French son, perhaps themed perhaps not, but imaginatively staged and offering a variety of composers. Something, perhaps, with a title like Echoes of the Left Bank.

N.C.

* * * *

SHAPESPEAR'S TWELFTH NIGHT

at Arena Stage

(ASIDE: Twelfth Night at Arena is the third major area production of the play in the last two seasons. Good for Twelfth Night, and a good production, but what about Measure for Measure, Troilus and Crssida, Coriolanus, etc? There's a lot of challenging Shakespear waiting to be done, and Arena is more capable than any other local theatre of calling the talent needed to

fill such difficult roles as that of Coriolanus. They will, I tell myself, they will.)

A KALLIROSCOPE MOSAIC GREETS the Arena audience eye in the admirably semple setting of Twelfth Night. The multi-colored magic swirls of the Arena floor support an airy tree whose tendril limbs stretch to the ceiling, providing, among other things, a chamber for the Countess Olivia and various garden and forest places. It's a more than suitable prospect for this piece of Shakespearean froth, as light and airy as the play itself.

Like other of Shakespeare's comedies, and like Plautus and like Italian comedies of the time, Twelfth Night is rich with mistaken identities, cases of love-at-first-sight, disguises, and a new twist, an ambitious steward who dares to think that he might rise to be his Lady's Lord. Where Shakespeare deals indulgently with the fickle but passionate lovers, he is not so kind to the ambitious steward Malvolio, and the Sub-plot involving the dour steward as the butt of Sir Toby Belch's elaborate joke adds an almost serious dimension to the comedy.

Set in the mythical land of Illyria, Twelfth Night concerns twins who have lost each other in a shipwreck and the separate ways in they rejoin each other in the court of Orsino, Duke of Illyria. In the course of their coming together, Viola, the girl twin, falls in love with Orsino, and while she is disguised as a boy the Countess Olivia, whom the Duke loves, falls in love with her. Before the end of the play, the arrival of Viola's brother Sebastian will straighten things out, but not before Olivia's uncle, Sir Toby Belch, -- with Olivia's Woman, Maria, and Sir Andrew Aguecheek and Fabian -- has manipulated Malviolio into believing that Olivia loves him and wants him to change from his dour, somber self into a smiling yellow-clad lover. With his transformation, he is declared mad and justled into a cell where Sir Toby torments him.

With that, and a few other plot items, the play is complete and dependent upon the energy of the acting, the imagination of the director and the delivery of the play's sweet songs. Although there are surprisingly few laughs in the first part of this production, director Jeff Bleckner reveals a comic tyouch with the various entrances and introductions of the characters. More affecting in the early part of the play is the presence of the show's clown, Feste, represented by Paul Giovanni.

Feste, assuming the time-honored role of fool, is entrusted with the criticism of his fellow beings and fulfills his role satisfactorily, but the actor Giovanni adds a sweet dimension, a compelling presence, as he sings and provides the play's music. Giovanni, in addition to acting and singing, has composed a number of beautiful melodies to support Shakespear's beautiful lyrics and while he is singing, with excellent accompaniment, I felt no need for the rest of the play to rush on, as I often do in Shakespearean comedy.

I am very dis-inclined to list actors in a negative manner, preferring to ignore bad or cheap acting and commend those actors who have made genuine contributions to a total theatre performance. But I do mention and discuss actors negatively from time to time in the perhaps mistaken notion that what I say may be of value to the actor. I am particularly loathe to discuss Richard Bauer's Malvolio in light of what I just stated and because I reviewed his last performance negatively and a t length.

Bauer's performance as Malvolio, however, is precisely the high and low point of this production. By this I mean that the height of humor in Twelfth Night is provided in his performance and it would have been a vastly different evening, perhaps much poorer, without his unrestrainded and skilled manipulation of the audience for laughs.

While I dislike the concept of manipulating audiences, my greater complaint is that the tools which he used in his manipulation were the same threadbare physical and vocal mannerism which I complained of in his Pantagleize. His toes are constantly to his heels, turning and twisting his body in a fashion that more simulates action than provides it. His vocal timbre has become a set of tricks I can recognize and anticipate. Though his voice is rich, the patterns which he uses to so surely elicit laughs are apparent repetitions of patterns that have long since been learned, and beyond a doubt, it would take a long time to unlearn them. In addition to which, his hands wave and weave and flutter in front of his face as they did in the last plays.

There are a number of differences in this performance, however, and good contrasts which bespeak a real talent. Bauer's hands, prior to his transformation, are neatly poised in a prim comic fashion, as though he were a priest preparing to pray. His hands, once again, act reams of material thrust from the cell of his madhouse, when nothing is seen of the rest of his body. And there is a good righteous dignity which he exudes, standing in long underwear while he learns the details of the plot which entrapped him.

While there is no mistakeing the costumes for a traditional Shakespearean presentation, and there is little visible unity in styles, each of the costumes designed for each of the characters seems to perfectly suit that character so that the contrast between the dignified Malvolio, in his dark suit, is richly comic when he is unveiled in a shocking yellow and pink near-zoot suit. And the riding crop and habit sported by Sir Andrew seems to determine Edward Herrmann's funny, if totally un-English, interpretation.

Herrmann and Robert Prosky, while extremely American in their representation, are quite a team as Sirs Andrew and Toby and, with Bauer, they bring the most laughs to the evening. More misty and sentimental is the role and performance of Zina Jasper as the Countess Olivia, and along with Giovanni's Feste, these performers make the evening worthwhile.

If you look at these reviews as a consumer guide, then I will urge you to see Twelfth Night, for Giovanni's music, for John Conklin's beautiful setting, for some very funny moments and because this will brobably be the last time the play is produced in the area for a few years.

N.C.

* * * * *

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SUPPORTING FREE THEATER IN BALTIMORE

A TRUE POOR THEATER, trained by Grotowski disciple, Tone Brulin, has moved into the old Center Stage building in Baltimore, under the auspices of the Antioch College Baltimore-Washington campus. The Otrabanda Company has been performing for free every Wednesday night for a couple of months now and is giving workshops other nights during the week.

Their theater piece, The Kaaka-Makaakoo, appeared briefly at the Stage Studio in Washington last summer and the theater could not hold all the people that wanted to see the show. It was a physically impressive piece of work and a singular experience in Washington, which had seen only one other lab theater in the city limits, the Theatre Laboratoire Vicinal, at Stage One, last Spring.

The Kaaka-Makaakoo is not a mature piece, not a theater piece full of mysteries and revalations, not a holy communication between actors and audience, as are the works of Grotowski and the Polish Lab Theatre and the works of Eugenio Barba and the Odin Teatret. It is, instead, a rich introduction to the talents and disciplines of an exciting young company of actors. In fact, the structure of the play is not unlike the story of their formation as a theater company. In the Play, a disparate group of individuals are persuaded to set off for an island paradise in a sequence called "Forming of the Group". In reality, the Otrabanda Company is made up of a group of Antioch/Yellow Springs college students who went off to an island paradise (Curaçao) to form a theater group.

A gradual exposure of caricatured consciousness is given to us through sequences of fortune telling and voyeurism and through movement and costuming. The characters have been carefully designed to reveal as much as possible about themselves every minute of their appearance before us. Thus, Uncle Bruno is a drooling masturbatory pervert, the kind who simpers up and talks about sex in the guise of sexual warnings. Ego #1 is a man-become machine in the factories and he continually moves as a piston creature of the machine age. Charity, sweet Charity, is a twisted, frigid woman whose sexual fears make sex dominant and when the god Kaaka-Makaakoo is revealed to the group in the mystic place of Tilento, it is she who becomes the object of a gang rape.

The discipline of these bodies, the facial control of some of the performers and the continual, multiple ritual movements in every open space on the stage area make the play an experience worth sharing. Though the play is not a play fully worthy of the talents put into it, it does make a perfect introduction to the group, evenly dividing the burden of performance among the performers and demanding equally of each performer.

This should be construed as a favorable review, if you have any doubts. The Kaaka-Makaakoo is rich in performance, well-endowed with humor and unlike anything else available in the Baltimore-Washington area. Some of these performers are going to be around for some time, and while you still can, you should visit the first production of the Otrabanda Company as the next production will probably be very different than this one.

Otrabanda, I am told, roughly means "the other side of the tracks" down home in Curaçao, where the group created the piece through arduous work with Tone Brulin. It's a suitable name for a poor theater, particularly here in America, where the right side of the tracks means Broadway and a decaying cultural tradition.

The performances are free in Baltimore, at 8:30 Wednesday nights at 45 West Preston Street, though the group is ecstatic over any contributions they receive. They'll also be performing two weekends in January, at the Open Stage, in Washington (244-6333). Hopefully, the sponsors at the Open Stage will also schedule some workshops with the Company and the training they can offer should benefit any serious performer in Washington. If you want to work with the group, bug the Open Stage and maybe they'll set up workshops.

ned chaillet

* * * *

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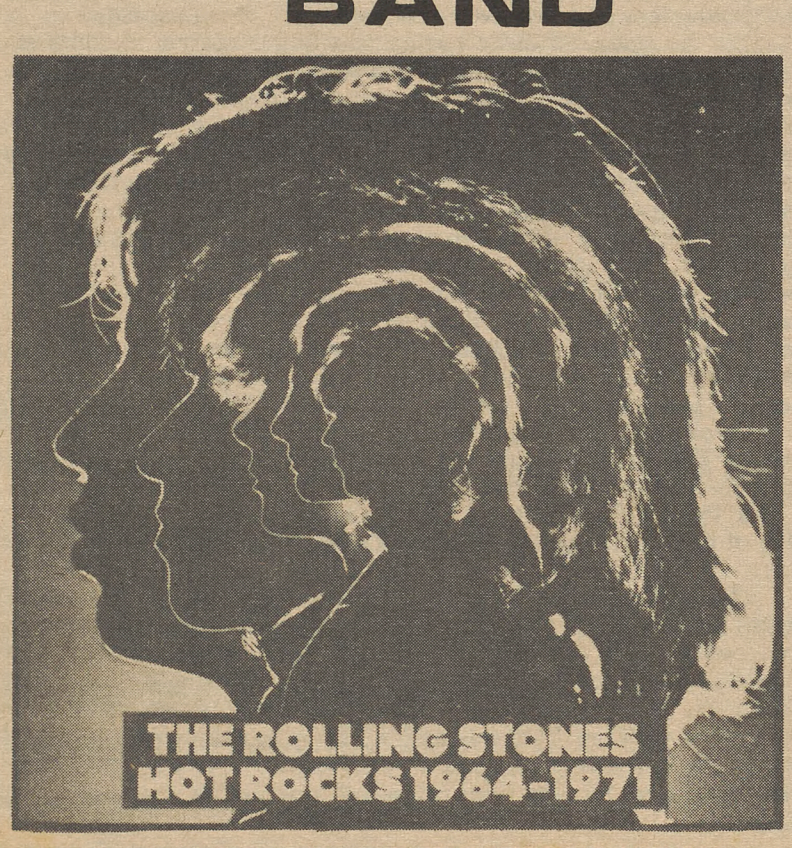

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